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Programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 for the Department of Public Information

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report sets out the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005 for the Department of Public Information. It provides an overview and covers executive direction and management, as well as the four subprogrammes: strategic communications services, news services, library services and outreach services.

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1. The proposed programme of work in the field of public information for the biennium 2004-2005, which is contained in the annex, is being brought to the attention of the Committee on Information. In section I, paragraph 7, of its resolution 52/220, the General Assembly stressed the role of the relevant intergovernmental bodies in the consideration of the narrative of the proposed programme budget, as well as the necessity for a timely presentation of their recommendations on the budget. The present report is prepared in response to that resolution.

2. The Committee is invited to make comments, which will be transmitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session for review during the consideration of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

Annex

Programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Part VII
Public information

Section 28
Public information

Overview

28.1 The Department of Public Information is responsible for implementing the programme of activities under this section. These activities are carried out at Headquarters in New York and through the worldwide network of United Nations information centres and services. The programme is guided by the General Assembly and its subsidiary organ, the Committee on Information.

28.2 Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/253, a comprehensive review of the Department of Public Information was undertaken in 2002. The initial results of the review were submitted to the Committee on Information (see A/AC.198/2002/2). Subsequently, a final report on the review was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session as part of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1). Guided by the reform efforts of the Secretary-General, the comprehensive review served to align the Department's core competencies with the long list of mandates it carries out.

28.3 The overarching mandate of the Department, which dates back to General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, is to increase awareness and understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations among peoples of the world. However, the comprehensive review found that the Department as a whole suffered from a fragmentation of its efforts as a result of its having too many mandates and missions. To help clarify the goals and purposes of the Department, and to enhance its overall effectiveness and efficiency, a new mission statement has been formulated, as follows:

> "The Department of Public Information's mission is to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact."

28.4 In adhering to its renewed mission, the Department will be guided by the priorities laid down by the General Assembly. Its core message, with the Millennium Declaration as its main guide, will focus on the eradication of poverty, conflict prevention, sustainable development, human rights, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the battle against international terrorism and the needs of the African continent (see resolution 57/130 B).

28.5 A new operating model has been created for the Department to realize its mission. It is based on a clear conception of the Department's role and an elaboration of its functions in a manner that emphasizes current communication challenges, while also providing the expected services to Member States. This model further recognizes that content generation emanates from the other departments and offices of the Secretariat and organizations of the United Nations system, while content coordination and refinement, as well as content presentation and distribution, are the

responsibility of the Department, working in close cooperation with the media, Member States and civil society partners.

28.6 The operating model aims to improve the Department's ability to deliver effective and targeted information programmes. As a result, a new organizational structure has been put into effect, as described below.

28.7 The Strategic Communications Division has been established to devise and disseminate United Nations messages centred on priority themes with the aim of broadening understanding of and support for the work of the United Nations. To this end, it has been enhanced by the inclusion of the network of United Nations information centres and services, as well as the Africa Section.

28.8 The central objective of the News and Media Division is the delivery of timely, accurate, objective and balanced news and information to the media and other audiences worldwide; it has been strengthened through the creation of the Internet Service, which covers United Nations web-site activities and news services.

28.9 The Outreach Division will provide information to stimulate opinion and debate through outreach efforts targeted directly to the public and in alliance with key partners, including non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other representatives of civil society. Emphasis will be placed on educational outreach and strengthening relationships with the academic community. Through the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the Division provides library products and services for use by Permanent Missions of Member States, the Secretariat, researchers and depository libraries worldwide.

28.10 The transformation of the Department of Public Information, as envisaged in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", would ensure that the United Nations has an effective communication mechanism in place to tell its story and thus gain the public support that is essential for strengthening the Organization. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002, reaffirmed the role of the Committee on Information in guiding the process of restructuring the Department, and invited the Committee to engage actively in this process. The guidance of the Committee on Information is being sought during its twenty-fifth session with regard to the new subprogramme structure and the related programme of work outlined in the proposed programme budget, and the concurrence of the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-third session will also be sought for appropriate recommendation to the General Assembly.

28.11 The United Nations information centres, the United Nations information services and the information components of the United Nations field offices serve as branch offices of the Department. As such, they are integral to the implementation of the Department's strategies and the work of its divisions in reaching key constituencies at the local level. The Department is developing an action plan to implement the proposal of the Secretary-General, of which the General Assembly took note at its fifty-seventh session (see resolution 57/300), to rationalize the network of United Nations information centres around regional hubs, starting with the creation of a regional hub in Western Europe. This new operating concept will also be aimed at achieving a better distribution of resources to information centres in developing countries and the redeployment of resources to other high-priority activities, such as advancing multilingualism on the United Nations web site and the systematic evaluation of the impact of major product and service lines, in accordance with results-based management — activities that have been strongly supported by Member States but for which resources are not available.

28.12 The Department will enhance its capacity to respond to unpredictable and fast-moving events around the world by providing information services to the media, Member States, non-governmental organizations and the public on United Nations actions in connection with these

critical situations. Its expertise will be strengthened through cooperation with relevant substantive Secretariat departments and offices and organizations of the United Nations system. It will continue to disseminate the United Nations message through traditional means of communication as well as using new technologies.

28.13 As part of the effort to focus on core competencies, the Cartographic Section is being transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Secretary-General proposed the transfer in his report "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", since a significant portion of the Section's work consists of the production of cartographic products and geographical information services in response to the requirements of the Security Council during its deliberations on peacekeeping operations. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/300, noted the proposal of the Secretary-General and decided to consider the matter in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. Accordingly, the outward redeployment of six posts (one P-5, three P-3, one P-2 and one General Service) is proposed for the biennium 2004-2005.

28.14 The guided tours and briefing programmes in New York, Geneva and Vienna, providing services for a total of approximately 1.4 million visitors per biennium, are addressed in income section 3, Services to the public, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, as are sales of United Nations publications.

Executive direction and management

28.15 The Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information is responsible for the overall direction and strategic management of United Nations communications and public information, both at Headquarters and in the field. The Under-Secretary-General establishes departmental policies and guidelines, deals with specific policy and management issues and problems, and is responsible for the administrative, financial and personnel management of the Department. The Under-Secretary-General is responsible for directing policy related to the committee liaison functions performed by the Department, with regard to both intergovernmental bodies (e.g., Committee on Information) and the system-wide United Nations Communications Group (UNCG). The Under-Secretary-General also serves as Coordinator for questions relating to multilingualism throughout the Secretariat.

28.16 The Under-Secretary-General assesses and reports on the programme performance of the Department through the Evaluation and Communications Research Unit. With greater emphasis being placed on performance management, the Unit is responsible for the implementation of an annual programme impact review, assisting programme managers in complying with results-based management and providing technical support to staff in assessing media coverage and target audience needs.

Table 28.1 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To support the work of the Secretary-General and the substantive purposes of the United Nations by engaging in strategic communication on the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
(a) Satisfaction of Member States and United Nations system partners with the work of the Department	(a) Level of feedback from Member States and United Nations system partners, received through formal channels, indicating that the Department effectively communicates the activities and concerns of the Organization
(b) Improved external communications and media relations of the United Nations	(b) Increase in media awareness and in positive reporting in connection with the media work undertaken by the Under-Secretary-General
(c) A strengthened culture of communication and coordination within the Secretariat and among United Nations system partners	(c) Increased number of joint and/or coordinated activities with UNCG member organizations
(d) Enhanced impact through an effective management culture	(d) The number of programme managers who use the performance management process for designing programmes and adopting best practices

External factors

28.17 The Office of the Under-Secretary-General is expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) Intergovernmental bodies and United Nations system organizations continue to support the Department's work;

(b) Political and other developments do not adversely affect media coverage and the delivery of planned activities.

Subprogramme 1
Strategic communication services

28.18 Subprogramme 1 will be implemented by the Strategic Communications Division, which includes the Committee Liaison Unit, the Communications Campaigns Service, the Information Centres Service and the global network of United Nations information centres, United Nations information services and information components of United Nations offices.

28.19 The Strategic Communications Division has been established to devise and disseminate United Nations messages centred on main themes, particularly the priorities outlined by the General Assembly and established by the Secretary-General. The Division develops communications strategies, in close collaboration with the substantive departments, the United Nations funds and

programmes and the organizations of the United Nations system, to promote the work of the United Nations on priority issues, using the Millennium Declaration as its guide.

28.20 These messages will be strategically conveyed to the public around the world through proactive relations with the media and other key intermediaries. Under the guidance of the Information Centres Service at Headquarters, the United Nations information centres, United Nations information services and information components of United Nations offices will work through local intermediaries to adapt this substantive content to their audiences, giving a local voice to global United Nations messages. Information components of peace missions will also carry these messages.

28.21 With a view to enhancing the capacity of the Organization to better inform peoples in all parts of the world about the United Nations, existing resources will be redirected to regional information hubs in strategic locations. In that context, plans are being developed to consolidate public information outreach to the member States of the European Union through the closure of the nine centres located in those States and the creation of a Western European information hub. This proposal does not include the United Nations Information Services at Geneva and Vienna, as they perform functions essential to the work of United Nations offices in those cities.

28.22 The United Nations Information Service at Geneva provides strategic communications and public information support to the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Conference on Disarmament, the Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The United Nations Information Service at Vienna provides strategic communications and public information support to the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the International Trade Law Branch.

28.23 The new operating concept for the information centres, with the consolidation of the information centres in Western Europe, would release staff and financial resources for redeployment to activities of higher priority, including those of information centres in developing countries, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/130 B. In particular, the centres in Africa and the Middle East would see an increase in resources, enabling them to deliver more effective and targeted programmes at a crucial time.

28.24 In its resolution 57/7, the General Assembly called for the United Nations to strengthen its advocacy role and public information activities in support of Africa's development. The Africa Section will promote awareness, among opinion leaders in Africa and in the international community, of the nature of the critical economic and social situation in Africa and of the domestic and international efforts required for recovery and development. It will produce a range of information materials and activities, including the publication of *Africa Recovery*, the resources for which are reflected in section 11 of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005, and will ensure dissemination to a diverse public, as well as to target groups such as parliamentarians, policy makers and civil society.

Table 28.2 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To broaden understanding of and support for the work of the United Nations on priority issues through strategic communications.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
(a) Successful collaboration with client departments to develop communications strategies on priority issues	(a) Percentage of clients that indicate satisfactory collaboration
(b) Increased awareness of key thematic issues among target audiences through the implementation of communications strategies on those issues	(b) Percentage of target audiences indicating increased awareness
(c) Increased utility of materials on priority issues that meet the needs of targeted media	(c) Percentage of media outlets that indicate satisfaction with materials produced in support of communications strategies

External factors

28.25 The subprogramme is expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) Client departments provide required substantive input;

(b) Institutions of civil society, redisseminators and other partners are able to participate in collaborative efforts of the United Nations, including at the local level;

(c) Political and other developments do not adversely affect the delivery of planned activities.

Subprogramme 2
News services

28.26 Subprogramme 2 will be implemented by the News and Media Division (which includes the Internet Service, the Press Service and the Radio and Television Service) and the Office of the Spokesman for the Secretary-General.

28.27 The objective of the subprogramme is to increase the interest of news organizations and media in, and their access to, up-to-date news and other information about the Organization and its activities. Done effectively, this will help build greater public support and awareness.

28.28 This objective will be accomplished through the real-time delivery of accurate, balanced and, whenever possible, customized news and information materials and services to media organizations in all regions, utilizing traditional media as well as new information technologies, including the Internet. Developing-country media will be a particular focus of this subprogramme.

28.29 The News and Media Division will continue to focus on maximizing the synergies made possible by the development of information technologies to realize the strategy outlined above, utilizing the daily output of the United Nations News Service, the United Nations web site, United Nations Radio and United Nations Television, including video, photos and press releases. Underpinning the news drive of the Division will be a major project, begun in the 2000-2001 biennium, to modernize

the Department's production and broadcast infrastructure, including further digitization. The creation of the Internet Service will contribute substantially to the strengthened and coordinated utilization of the Internet as a multimedia channel for both the production of such news materials and their dissemination to all regions quickly and in all official languages.

28.30 The Division will proactively reach out directly to journalists and media organizations and seek partnerships with broadcasters to ensure that the news media in all regions have access at all times to news about United Nations activities and to the perspectives of the Organization as it addresses the priority concerns identified by the Member States. By seeking feedback from such partners and other clients, the Division will ensure the continuing relevance of its various news products.

28.31 The resources freed up by creating a regional information hub in Western Europe will in part be redirected to strengthen the multilingual capacity of the United Nations web site.

Table 28.3 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To increase the interest of news organizations and media in, and their access to, up-to-date news and other information about the Organization and its activities.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
Satisfaction with the availability of timely, accurate, objective and balanced information and/or services to the media, delegations, other audiences and redisseminators on the role of the United Nations in addressing the priority issues before the Organization	The satisfaction of users with the availability of timely, accurate, objective and balanced information and/or services

External factors

28.32 The subprogramme is expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) National and international media organizations will participate in partnerships and co-productions;

(b) Political, economic and other factors will enable media organizations to access and redisseminate United Nations information material.

Subprogramme 3
Library services

28.33 Subprogramme 3 will be implemented by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, Outreach Division.

28.34 The subprogramme aims to create and/or provide timely and up-to-date information products and services to meet the needs of delegates, secretariat staff and researchers; to facilitate access to United Nations information for depository libraries and the general public worldwide; to contribute to bridging the digital divide; to mobilize the international library community, in particular depository libraries, as conduits of outreach to civil society; and to oversee and coordinate the activities of the United Nations libraries.

28.35 The Dag Hammarskjöld Library, in coordination with other United Nations libraries as well as libraries of the wider United Nations system, will continue to move in the direction of becoming a

virtual library, while not neglecting the print collections of United Nations documents, books, serials and government documents required by its users. There will be increasing emphasis on the creation and delivery of electronic information, outreach to depository libraries and support for multilingualism. The delivery of customized information directly to the desktops of Permanent Missions at Headquarters and Secretariat staff worldwide will be expanded. The Library's Internet and Intranet sites will be enriched and further developed in all six official languages, with multilingual retrieval capabilities. Access to commercially available electronic information will be made available in a cost-effective way through the United Nations System Consortium. Access for depository libraries to United Nations databases will be promoted where feasible to ensure rapid, complete and cost-effective document distribution. Through active participation in inter-agency library forums, the Library will promote the sharing of information throughout the United Nations system.

28.36 In-house creation and processing of data, including databases and other electronic products, published indexes, standards and guidelines for bibliographic control and multilingual reference tools will be expanded and improved. The UNBIS Thesaurus will be regularly maintained as a six-language database. Two comprehensive, accurate and high-quality annual editions of the *Yearbook of the United Nations* will be published, covering the years 2002 and 2003, and will constitute input for parallel CD-ROM versions of the *Yearbook*.

28.37 A major focus will be on training, including courses for Headquarters users and depository librarians overseas, as well as electronic delivery of advice, manuals and database structures to small United Nations libraries in the field.

Table 28.4 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To facilitate access to timely and up-to-date library products and services for use by delegates, Permanent Missions of Member States, the Secretariat, researchers and depository libraries worldwide.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
(a) Easier, more extensive and timelier access by users to products and services of the Library	(a) User satisfaction with quality and timeliness and ease of access to the products and services of the Library
(b) Timely issuance of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*	(b) Reduced time lag between the end of the year covered and the publication date of the relevant volume

External factors

28.38 The subprogramme will be expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) The interest of target audiences in electronic information will continue to grow;

(b) United Nations system agencies will continue to cooperate and collaborate, particularly in availing themselves of online services through the Consortium;

(c) Prices for online services will remain stable or become more favourable;

(d) Official documentation will be available on time;

(e) Delays related to bidding and printing processes will be minimal.

Subprogramme 4
Outreach services

28.39 Subprogramme 4 will be implemented by the Outreach Division, which includes the Civil Society Service, the Sales and Marketing Section and the secretariat of the Publications Board. The Division also includes the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, which is covered in subprogramme 3, Library services.

28.40 The objective of subprogramme 4 is to promote awareness of the role and work of the United Nations on priority issues, using the Millennium Declaration as a guide, and to inform and influence the public through outreach efforts targeted at key intermediaries, such as non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and other representatives of civil society, as well as directly to the general public.

28.41 In this connection, the Outreach Division will work to develop, strengthen and expand its relationships with partners both within the United Nations system and among non-governmental organizations, the academic community and the private sector. The Outreach Division will also seek opportunities to promote more effectively its programmes and services designed for those audiences, as well as for the general public, capitalizing on the opportunities provided by new information and communication technologies, including the Internet and video-conferencing.

Table 28.5 **Objective for the biennium, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement**

Objective: To inform and stimulate opinion and debate through outreach efforts targeted directly to the public and in alliance with key partners, including non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, other representatives of civil society and the media, using the Millennium Declaration as a guide.

Expected accomplishments	*Indicators of achievement*
Enhanced understanding of the role, work and concerns of the United Nations resulting from outreach activities, programmes and services	Percentage of target audiences indicating satisfaction that their understanding of the United Nations has grown or improved

External factors

28.42 The subprogramme is expected to achieve its objectives and expected accomplishments on the assumption that:

(a) Institutions of civil society, redisseminators and other partners, including other offices of the United Nations system, are able to collaborate with the Department;

(b) Academic interest in the principles, activities and concerns of the United Nations does not diminish;

(c) Global access to Internet services and video-conferencing is not inhibited by financial or technological constraints;

(d) Political and other developments do not adversely affect collaborative partnerships or programme attendance;

(e) Security concerns do not have a negative impact or result in restricted access to United Nations Headquarters.

Programme support

28.43 The Executive Office provides the administrative, managerial and programme support necessary for the implementation of the mandated activities of the Department of Public Information. It assists the Under-Secretary-General in the preparation of the medium-term plan, the preparation, administration and monitoring of the programme budget and the management of trust funds and extrabudgetary resources; provides relevant support services for the efficient utilization of human resources; and plans, controls and coordinates requirements related to general office administration. It also handles the Department's information technology needs, including the maintenance and upgrading of computer equipment and user applications.